

# Growing Healthy Kids Columbus Coalition

Columbus Public Health, Columbus OH



## Vision

Columbus is a community in which all children have daily opportunities for active play and access to nutritious foods that lead to children entering kindergarten ready to live, learn and play at their best.

## Who We Are

Growing Healthy Kids Columbus (GHKC) is comprised of representatives from 45 community, faith-based, service, industry, early childhood education and healthcare organizations or programs that serve pregnant women and young children and is co-chaired by Columbus Public Health (CPH) and The Ohio State University Extension.

## Statement of the Problem

Obesity affects children of all ages, including 12.4% of 2- to 5-year olds in Ohio<sup>1</sup>. In the city of Columbus, 32% of preschoolers and 28% of kindergarteners were overweight or obese during the 2013-14 school year. Early childhood obesity is especially concerning because obese children are more likely to become obese adults and develop obesity-related diseases such as diabetes, metabolic syndrome and cardiovascular disease.<sup>2</sup>

City of Columbus Preschoolers (2013-14)

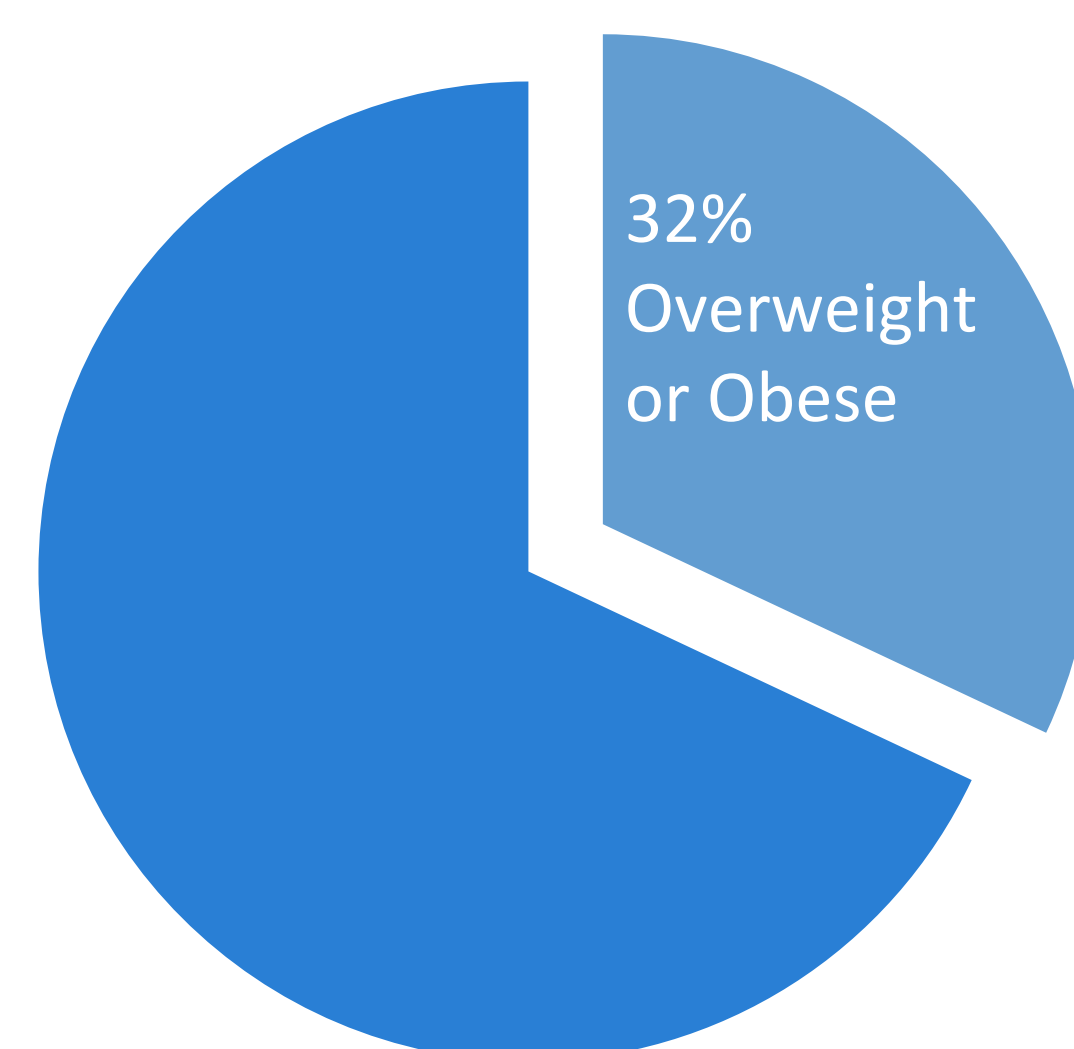


Figure 1.

1. Birch, L.L., Parker, L. & Burns, A. (Eds.). (2011). "Early childhood obesity prevention policies." Washington, DC: National Academies Press.  
2. Ogden, C.L., Carroll, M.D., Kit, B.K. & Flegal, K.M. (2004). "Prevalence of childhood and adult obesity in the United States," 2011-2012. Journal of the American Medical Association, 311, 806-814.

## What We Do



Figure 2. Social Ecological Model

GHKC uses the social ecological model as a framework for implementing multi-level strategies that target policy, system and environmental changes (PSEC), as well as individual behaviors. Monthly meetings are held to share information, to plan and report on PSEC activities, and provide professional development related to both content (dietary guideline updates, etc.) and PSEC implementation (finding and using evidence-based strategies, talking with decision-makers, etc.). Efforts to implement PSEC have included the development of three campaigns:

- "Water First for Thirst" (2013)
- "An Hour a Day to Play" (2014)
- "Healthy Gatherings" (2015 – present)



Figure 3. Example posters of previous GHKC campaigns

To support these campaigns, the coalition has developed the following materials:

- Online resources
- Toolkits
- Sample policies
- Technical assistance plans

The coalition's focus on PSECs has resulted in member organizations' increased awareness of and self-efficacy for implementing PSEC strategies, both small and wide-ranging.

## Impact

In 2016, GHKC organizations reported:

- 11 policy changes, including a water only policy at all Columbus City School pre-k events
- 16 system changes, including Mid-Ohio Foodbank mobile markets at every Moms2B location
- 15 environment changes, including OSU LifeSports who now only serves water at all events
- Collaboration amongst coalition partners, Children's Hunger Alliance and Healthy Children, Healthy Weights, resulted in the implementation of 602 policies amongst early care providers.

GHKC also hosted the 2017 Healthy Gatherings Workshop, which promoted healthy eating, physical activity and smoke-free environments at meetings, events and celebrations. The workshop had 64 participants, including community leaders, stakeholders and organizations, from 40 different organizations/programs reaching an estimated 43,530 employees.



Figure 4. Images of the 2017 Healthy Gatherings Workshop

## Commitment and Sustainability

The collaborative effort of GHKC is sustained by the commitment of CPH and the GHKC coalition members. The sustainability of the work is met through the principles of the collective impact framework, including:

- Common agenda
- Common progress measures established by yearly objectives
- Mutually reinforcing activities given as next steps at the end of each meeting
- Continuous communication provided in monthly meetings
- CPH as the backbone organization with a dedicated Program Manager to act as coordinator, facilitator, and organizer of the GHKC coalition.

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